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MANUAL OF INSTRUCTION

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FOR

SINGLE STICK DRILL.

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MANUAL OF INSTRUCTION

FOR

SINGLE STICK DRILL.

All Cavalry recruits will receive one hour's instruction in stick practice per diem for at least forty days, and Sergeant-Instructors of Fencing will regulate the course as follows:—

The first ten lessons or so should be devoted to instructing the men in the “cuts,” “guards,” and “points,” without an opposing rank. When they know these well, during the next fifteen lessons they should be formed in double ranks for the “Practices,” care being taken to make the men longe rapidly, and to “cut,” “guard,” and “point” quickly from the engage. The next five lessons will be devoted to “partial loose-play,” that is, the Instructor will give the command to one rank to “attack,” upon which each man of the named rank will choose his own form of attack, and the men of the opposing rank will confine themselves to guarding.

The Instructor will use his own discretion as to allowing a “return” to be made from a successful “guard” or “parry” during this period, and so gradually prepare the men for “regular loose-play,” which will be practised daily for the

remainder of the course; but only during the latter half of each lesson, the first half being devoted to the "Practices." This is with a view to check the natural tendency of the men to become unsteady. The ranks and opponents are to be changed repeatedly, and swords "sloped" the moment the play becomes at all wild.

All officers on joining the Cavalry are also to be put through this course.

Before a drilled soldier is allowed to take part in the Annual Competition in Swordsmanship, he will be required to attend "stick drill" under the Fencing Instructor for at least six times, and if he shows careless or bad play in any way, he should be handed over to the Fencing Instructor for another twenty days' course, and not allowed to compete for a prize in the Riding School.

Every encouragement should be given to the men to attend voluntarily for instruction in "Fencing," "Bayonet Practice," "Broad Sword Exercise," "Lead Cutting," &c.

STICK DRILL.

WORDS OF COMMAND.

Fall in.—On the command "Fall in," the men will form up in single rank at the "slope."

From the right—number.—As usual.

Odd Numbers three paces forward—March.—On the word "March," the odd numbers will step three paces to the front in the usual manner, and full distance from the right is taken by both odd and even numbers.

Prepare for Stick Practice.—On the word "Practice," each man will (1) make a half turn to his left on both heels, and (2) turn the right toe straight to the front, at the same time passing the left hand behind the back, the fore-arm resting on the lower part of the back, the hand clenched. In this position the feet will be at right angles to each other, and the right toe straight to the front, the back of the right heel touching the inside of the left. The sword hand should not be carried round with the body, but point straight to the original front. However wide the feet may be apart they have the same relative

position, viz.: the right foot straight to the front, the left to the left.

Engage.—Advance the right foot about 16 or 18 inches straight to the front, and plant it firmly on the ground, both knees well bent and turned out, the body erect, left shoulder thrown back, head kept well up, eyes directed to the front, and (if there is an opposing rank) fixed on the opponent's eyes, at the same time carrying the sword straight to the front, the point about in line with the left eye, the forte of the blade covering the right breast, edge to the front and in line with the knuckles, the back of the hand up and about in line with the centre of the top muscle of the arm, the elbow to be about 6 inches from the body, the blade of the sword to be a continuation of the fore-arm, so as to form a direct line from elbow to point. That part of the stick which is in line with the knuckles represents the edge. The stick at all times to be grasped in the same manner as a sword.

Assault.—Make a sharp back-handed "cut," and place the back of the sword on the right shoulder, which should be thrown a little back, hand in line with the forehead, elbow under the hand.

Cut One.—Make a sharp diagonal "cut" that would enter the left side of the opponent's neck, and (if continued) pass out through the right breast.

At the time of delivering the "cut" advance the right foot 16 or 18 inches further to the front, and place it firmly on the ground. The moment the right foot quits the ground to advance, stiffen the left leg up, and brace the knee firmly back, the left foot firm and flat on the ground, body and head erect.

As you were.—On the command "As you were!" resume the position of the "assault" by re-bending the left knee, and forcing it well out; at the same time press strongly off the right foot and plant it firmly on the ground, as when at the "engage." This is called the "second position."

The position on the delivery of the "cuts" is called the "longe," or the "third position."

During the preliminary lessons great attention must be paid to these positions, and the use of the left leg when making the "longe" and recovering from it, as bad habits, if not immediately checked, entail much correction after.

When this "cut" has been sufficiently practised the word is given (from the extended position).

For cut Two—prepare.—Recover to the “second position,” placing the back of the sword on the left shoulder, hand the same height as for “cut one.”

Cut Two.—Longe out as before, delivering the “cut” diagonally, so that it would enter the opponent’s neck on the right side, and (if continued) pass out through the left breast.

For cut three—prepare.—Recover to the “second position,” and place the back of the sword on the right shoulder, the same as for “cut one,” except that the hand should be no higher than the mouth.

Cut Three.—Longe out and deliver the “cut” horizontally from right to left; the “cut” being directed between the arm-pit and the hip on the opponent’s left side.

For cut Four—prepare.—Recover, and place the flat of the sword on the left shoulder, elbow and hand in line with the shoulder; the arm and sword forming three sides of a square in front of the body.

Cut Four.—Longe out and deliver the “cut” horizontally from left to right, the same height as “cut three.”

Cuts “one” and “two” may be delivered perpendicularly, they are then called “Head cuts.”

Cuts “three” and “four” may be made at the leg in dismounted play.

Engage.—As before.

Rest.—On the command “Rest” (which should be given when the men are in the “second position”) drop the point of the sword on the ground and straighten both knees.

As soon as the cuts have been well practised singly, the men should be put through them by numbers; that is, the Instructor giving the words “one,” “two,” “three,” or “four;” the men will then longe out, deliver the named “cut,” recover, and lay for the following one, and after “cut four,” come to the “engage.”

The Instructor must be most careful to impress upon the men the necessity of delivering every “cut” with a straight arm, and any tendency to wrist-cutting (which is impossible with a heavy sword) must be checked at once.

Slope Swords.—Make a sharp “cut” upwards, bringing the back of the sword on the shoulder, the thick part of the arm resting on the hip, hand in front of the elbow as usual, at the same time bring the right heel to the left as before.

GUARDS.

The "guards" are four in number. It should be explained to men under instruction that a guard is protection against a "cut" only, and that for a "point," a "parry" or "moving-guard" must be used. The act of changing from one guard to another, or from the "engage" to a "guard," will generally form a "parry."

First Guard.—Drop the point until about in line with the left breast, and throw the hand smartly over to the left a few inches above and in advance of the head. Should the assailant's "cut" be delivered perpendicularly, keep the hand over to the right, so as to bring the "forte" of the sword above the head, and the point inclined to the left front.

Engage.—As before.

Second.—Drop the elbow, and carry the sword over to the right, edge to the right, the forte covering the neck and shoulder on the right, the point inclined to the front, the elbow three or four inches from the side.

Engage.—As before.

Third.—Drop the point of the sword and carry the hand over to the left, about in line with the nipple of the breast, the "forte" of the sword covering the ribs on the left, the point inclined to the front.

Engage.—As before.

Fourth.—Drop the point of the sword and carry the right elbow up square with the shoulder, forming a direct line from the elbow to the point of the sword, which should be about the height of the knee.

Engage.—As before.

Slope Swords.—As before.

It must be borne in mind that the "forte" of the blade is the only part that should resist the force of the "cut," and it should, therefore, be placed opposite that portion of the body that requires protection.

The point of the sword should, in all guards except the "second," be kept as near the centre of, and as close to, the opponent's body as is consistent with safety.

It is quite possible to cover the upper part of the body on the left by "quarte;" this is done from the "engage" by

simply carrying the hand across to the left, and turning the palm slightly upwards, but it is a weak "guard," and not to be recommended.

POINTS.

"Points" can be delivered from all the "guards," and also from the "engage."

They should all be delivered with the back of the hand up, and directly from the "guards" by simply straightening the arm, without drawing back the hand.

It should be explained to the men that a "point" has a great advantage over a "cut;" for the reason that one motion only is required in making it, whereas, in the delivery of a "cut" two motions are necessary.

GUARDS AND POINTS.

First.—Form the "first guard," and on the command "point," lunge rapidly out and deliver the "point" at the head or breast of the adversary.

Guard.—On the command "Guard," recover and show the "first guard."

Second.—Form the "second guard."

Point.—Lunge out and deliver "point," as before.

Guard.—Recover to "second guard."

Third.—Form "third guard."

Point.—Lunge out and deliver "point" at the body.

Guard.—Recover to "third guard."

Fourth.—Form "fourth guard."

Point.—Lunge out and deliver "point" at body.

Engage.—Recover to the "engage."

Slope Swords.—As before.

“CUTS,” “GUARDS,” AND “POINTS,”

By words of Command.

Assault.—As before.

One.—Longe out and make “cut one.”

Guard.—Recover and show “first guard.”

Point.—Longe out and deliver “first point.”

For cut Two—prepare.—Recover and lay for “cut two.”

Two.—As before.

Guard.—As before.

Point.—As before.

For cut Three—prepare.—As before.

Three.—As before.

Guard.—As before.

Point.—As before.

For cut Four—prepare.—As before.

Four.—As before.

Guard.—As before.

Point.—As before.

Engage.—As before.

Slope Swords.—As before.

Front.—As before.

Stand at Ease.—On the command “Stand at ease,” draw back the right foot and bend the left knee as usual; the sword remaining at the “slope.”

As soon as the recruits have a thorough knowledge of the way to lay for, and make the different cuts and guards, they should be practised in (1st) making “cuts” and “guards” from the “engage;” (2), making “cuts” from the “guards,” say, for instance, from “first guard.” Longe out and “cut three;” (3rd), “cuts” on the longe from any sort of “guard,” and in fact practise all sorts of combinations of cutting, guarding, and pointing in all positions. When well up in this they may proceed to the “Practices,” to form up for which from single rank after numbering from the right, the word of command is “Odd numbers, three paces to the front—march; and full distance is then taken from the right. On the word “two,” the odd numbers turn right about, and the even numbers take a pace to the right.

Prepare for Stick Practice.—As before.

PRACTICES.

These are four in number, and in them, a "perpendicular cut" is introduced, called the "head cut," which is defended by the "first guard," but with the hand some inches more over to the right, the "forte" of the sword protecting the top of the head, the defender looking under the sword.

In the first three practices the attacking files longe and deliver the "first cut," remaining on the longe, and making all other "cuts," "guards," &c., in this position, and recovering to the "second position" on the command "Engage."

The defending files remain in the "second position" during the whole of these practices.

In the last practice, all the attacks should be made with the "longe," and the files in turn recover and form the "guards" in the "second position."

FIRST PRACTICE.—FRONT RANK ATTACKING.

Head.—On the command "Head," the front rank longe in and "cut" at head; rear rank defend by "head guard."

Head.—Rear rank cut at head from "head guard," remaining in the "second position;" front rank defend by "head guard."

One.—Front rank "cut one;" rear rank defend by "first guard."

Engage.—As usual. Front rank recover; rear rank drop the hand to the "engage."

Front Rank.

Head.—Cut at head.

Head.—Guard head.

Two.—"Cut two."

Engage.—As usual.

Head.—Cut at head.

Head.—Guard head.

Three.—"Cut three."

Engage.—As usual.

Head.—Cut at head.

Head.—Guard head.

Four.—"Cut four."

Engage.—As usual.

Rear Rank.

Guard head.

Cut at head.

"Second guard."

Guard head.

Cut at head.

"Third guard."

Guard head.

Cut at head.

"Fourth guard."

SECOND PRACTICE.—FRONT RANK ATTACKING.

Front Rank.

One.—"Cut one."
Head.—Guard head.
Head.—Cut at head.
Engage.—As usual.
Two.—"Cut two."
Head.—Guard head.
Head.—Cut at head.
Engage.—As usual.
Three.—"Cut three."
Head.—Guard head.
Head.—Cut at head.
Engage.—As usual.
Four.—"Cut four."
Head.—Guard head.
Head.—Cut at head.
Engage.—As usual.

Rear Rank.

"First guard."
 Cut at head.
 Guard head.

 "Second guard."
 Cut at head.
 Guard head.

 "Third guard."
 Cut at head.
 Guard head.

 "Fourth guard."
 Cut at head.
 Guard head.

THIRD PRACTICE.—FRONT RANK ATTACKING.

Front Rank.

Head.—Cut at head.
One.—"First guard."
Head.—Cut at head.
Engage.—
Head.—Cut at head.
Two.—"Second guard."
Head.—Cut at head.
Engage.—
Head.—Cut at head.
Three.—"Third guard."
Head.—Cut at head.
Engage.—
Head.—Cut at head.
Four.—"Fourth guard."
Head.—Cut at head.

Rear Rank.

Guard head.
 "Cut one."
 Guard head.

 Guard head.
 "Cut two."
 Guard head.

 Guard head.
 "Cut three."
 Guard head.

 Guard head.
 "Cut four."
 Guard head.

FOURTH PRACTICE.—FRONT RANK ATTACKING.

One.—Front rank longe and “cut one;” rear rank defend by “first guard.”

Point.—Rear rank longe and deliver point at the body below the hand, upon which the front rank recover to “third guard” in the “second position.”

Two.—Front rank longe and “cut two,” and rear rank recover to “second position” and form “second guard.”

Engage.

Two.—Front rank longe and “cut two;” rear rank form “second guard.”

Point.—Rear rank longe and point at head; front rank recover to “second position” and form “second guard.”

Four.—Front rank longe and “cut four;” rear rank recover to “second position” and form “fourth guard.”

Engage.

Feint at head and point.—Front rank feint a “cut” at head, and then longe in and deliver “point” at the body; rear rank show “first” and defend by “fourth guard.”

Point.—Rear rank point at head with the longe; front rank recover and defend by “second guard.”

Point.—Front rank longe and deliver “point” at the body; rear rank recover and defend by “fourth guard.”

Engage.

All “feints” must be made when in the “second position,” and not when making the “longe.” The “longe” must be made with the “true attack” the instant the attacking file sees the “feint” has deceived his adversary.

Repeat all the foregoing “Practices” with the rear rank attacking.

The words of command are only for use in the preliminary lessons. As soon as they are correctly performed the Instructor will simply give the words “Attack” and “Engage” for each division of the “Practices.”

GENERAL INSTRUCTION.

When a class is formed in double rank the Instructor must pass up and down behind the men for the purpose of correcting all faults, and must personally take men in hand who are awkward or nervous, and deal patiently with them.

In the ordinary dismounted loose play a lively use of the feet is usually cultivated, but in the instruction of the Cavalry soldier it should not be encouraged, as it must be remembered that it is impossible to avoid a return by "reining back" when mounted. A return or an attack is sometimes avoided by leaning back in the saddle, but it is decidedly unsafe, and should on no account be allowed. A quick eye, a strong arm, a light hand, and a firm seat, are what the Cavalry soldier requires to make him a good swordsman.

RULES FOR LOOSE PLAY.

I.—The adversaries should fall in at "the slope," just beyond striking distance, and on the command "attack" should come to the "engage," and each make a short step to the front.

II.—"Cuts" only count that are given with the edge of the sword.

III.—When both adversaries attack at the same time and in the same position, and both hits are "on," neither of the hits count.

IV.—If both attack and are "on" together, but only one longes, the "point" or "cut" of the one who longes counts.

V.—A second attack on the one longe may be made, but if at the time of the second attack a "return" be made and both are "on," the "return" only counts.

VI.—“Cuts” and “points” are fair all over the body, head, arms, or legs.

VII.—As the dismounted is simply preparatory to the mounted combat, men should not be allowed to advance or retire, or to draw back the right leg, but should be taught to trust solely to the “guards” and “parries” for defence.

VIII.—In competitions, if men frequently counter each other, the judges may after due warning (1) disqualify both competitors, or (2) order one to guard and the other to defend, and after a few hits change the order; and then the man who shows the better knowledge of the two should be declared the winner.

A “return” is an “attack” made after a successful guard or parry, and it should be impressed upon the men that a “return” cannot be made too quickly.

Masks and jackets should always be worn at loose play.

The opponents should be changed from time to time.

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